house. He was in bed and, though very weak and absent-minded, seemed relaxed and cheerful. I promised I would return the next morning.

Approaching the hall an hour after the meeting was supposed to have come to order, I noticed that something was wrong: detachments of police on the street corners, military patrols, soldiers massed in the courtyards. No guards, however, were posted at the entrance of the building. As soon as I reached the door, somebody opened it briskly from inside and shouted, "Come in." I was almost dragged into the entrance hall and found myself in the middle of a ring of policemen. An officer ordered, "Go to the main hall!"

The delegates and guests were crowded into the hall, encircled by a double line of soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets. When I was pushed inside the circle, a man who sat at the chairman's table said flatly, "Order of the Executive Committee: Offer no resistance, answer no question, destroy all personal papers and arms."

Nobody moved. The soldiers along the walls looked as if they had been carved out of solid rock. The silence was broken only by a soft clanking of tools at the chairman's table, where two youths were busy smashing the small arms passed to them from the assembly. How small was the heap of weapons before them in comparison with the fence of rifles and glittering bayonets all around! The hammering stopped—the last tiny revolver had been broken.

The registration of prisoners began after midnight. Nobody told his name. All were registered under sobriquets assigned by the police: "Round Hat," "Blond Whiskers," "Wide Belt." I was registered as "Letters W.W. in Galoshes." Before dawn the prisoners were loaded into police vans, twenty or thirty in each. What was our destination? Jail, or the Fortress of Peter and Paul, or the firing squad? Our van had no windows, but after a long drive over cobblestones the wheels hit a smooth surface. A long bridge! Now we knew, we were crossing the Neva. Our destination was the central prison—the Crosses.

IN THE CROSSES

Time ceased to move. I was alone with my thoughts and dreams. How badly I needed rest! I enjoyed lying on the cot in my cell, composing my memoirs sentence after sentence, remembering step by step what had happened in the past three months. Since I had refused to tell my name, I could neither get letters nor receive visitors. Moreover, I made no effort to establish contact with other prisoners